GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3726
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2015
Decline in Sharks Species
Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

a) whether the share of sharks in the total fish landings has declined by more than 64% from the year 1983 to 2014 and some shark species have completely vanished from the Indian coastal waters and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
(b) the details of the total annual quantity of shark landings during the past five years;
(c) whether the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has drawn up an action plan called Guidance on National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks in India and if so, the details thereof; and
(d) the proactive steps taken by the Government to save these natural predators from external extinction?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(DR.SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) & (b) The share of all elasmobranchs which include sharks, skates and rays in the total marine fish landings has declined considerably. However, there are no reports to indicate vanishing of any shark species from the Indian coastal waters. As reported by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), the year- wise total quantity of shark landings during the past five years is given below:

Year Sharks landings (in tonnes)
2010 25425
2011 26746
2012 22537
2013 20529
2014 20078

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(c) Yes, Madam. Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has prepared an Action Plan namely Guidance on National Plan of Action (NPOA) for Conservation and Management of Sharks in India. The document presents an overview of the shark fishery in India, current management measures, knowledge gaps to be addressed and suggested action plan for shark fishery management.

(d) The following proactive steps have been taken by the Government for protection of sharks and other elasmobranchs:
i) The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has included 10 species of elasmobranchs including sharks under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
ii) The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has issued a policy circular dated 21st August, 2013 on prohibition of finning of Shark fins in the sea.
iii) The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Department of Commerce) has prohibited export of Shark fins of all species of shark and also amended the import policy conditions of shark fins from 'free' to 'prohibited' under Foreign Trade Policy vide their Notifications dated 6th February, 2015.
iv) Uniform fishing ban on all fishing vessels in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) beyond territorial waters from 15th April to 14th June along the east coast and 1st June to 31st July along the west coast has been imposed by the Government vide Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Order dated 10th April, 2015.
v) Declaration of Marine Protected Areas as Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for conservation of marine species including sharks.
vi) Fishing practices in territorial waters are regulated by the maritime States through their respective Marine Fishing Regulation Acts (MFRAs) by way of gear-specific mesh size regulations, restrictions on operation of certain gears like ring seines, purse seines and pair trawling, introduction of by-catch reduction devices and seasonal ban on fishing.
vii) The Guidelines issued by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries vide Order dated 12th November, 2014 for operation of deep sea fishing vessels in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) also provide for conservation of endangered marine fish species declared as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
viii) The Indian Coast Guard strictly monitors and enforces implementation of the existing statutory provisions related to conservation of marine fish species including sharks.

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